

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15) introduced the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Network Act of 2012. This bill champions science, technology, engineering and mathematic educational initiatives that teach and train a dynamic, competitive workforce and bolster America's position as a global leader in innovation. Specifically, it seeks to bridge the educational opportunity gap by providing experiences for students to build STEM competencies. The STEM Network Act will further build private-public partnerships and increase STEM educational opportunities in communities nationwide.

“For our nation to remain a leader in scientific advancement and technological innovation, we must provide our students with opportunities to experience how science is really done, which will help them to understand and tackle increasingly complex issue,” said Rep. Honda a former science teacher and educator of more than 30 years. “The STEM Network Act provides much needed resources for state and local collaborations and public-private partnerships, in order to provide these opportunities: delivering the most effective curriculum tools for learning STEM; helping train even higher qualified STEM teachers; exposing students to what science, technology, engineering, and math careers are really like; and making the STEM education experience a high quality use of the only currency students have, their time.”

Rep. Honda's bill creates a grant program to provide funding to develop and establish networks for a range of activities, including:

- Identifying strengths and weakness among State STEM education efforts and assisting in the implementation of PreK-12 content standards in the program;
- Promoting the emphasis of STEM educational content in elementary pre-service teacher programs while developing curriculum tools and professional development for in-service STEM teachers, fostering innovation and inventiveness;
- Developing systems for the implementation of extended learning times on school sites to enhance STEM education inside and outside of the classroom; and
- Supporting mentoring programs, workforce education and training, and STEM professional outreach that help meet the educational needs of students in the 21st century.

These initiatives will make a significant positive impact on STEM programs and will help to keep America educationally competitive on the global stage.

STEM Networks utilize input from local educators, administrators, industry leaders, parents, philanthropists, and representatives from the STEM communities in an effort to increase student achievement in the STEM disciplines throughout all grades, PreK-12. The Networks also facilitate the development of strategies to increase participation of underrepresented populations in STEM disciplines and enable methods of engaging English Language Learners and Special Education Students. With the creation of the Common Core Standards in Mathematics and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), State Networks can lead the efforts in bringing STEM educational excellence to their local and state communities.

Chris Roe, CEO of the California STEM Learning Network: "The California STEM Learning Network is pleased to support the STEM Network Act sponsored by Rep. Honda. This vital legislation will catalyze and leverage innovative work being undertaken in California and nearly every state to advance STEM education. With the implementation of common standards in math and now science across most states, it is more critical than ever that states work together with partners from business and industry and with federal agencies to leverage scarce resources and ensure coordination and scaling of best practices, which this legislation will enable."

David L. Gollaher, Ph.D., California Healthcare Institute (CHI) president and CEO: "California leads the world in biomedical research and development. Our continued leadership relies upon a workforce proficient in math, science, technology and engineering, which begins by engaging students early and throughout their education. The innovative partnerships this legislation promotes, involving K-12 educators, state and local government, community colleges and universities, as well as the private sector, are critical to the future of our industry, to the state's and nation's economy, and to global health. CHI applauds Congressman Honda for his diligent and thoughtful leadership on this important measure."

Rich Adduci, Chief Information Officer, Boston Scientific: "As a leader in the Medical Technology industry, we recognize how critical it is to have a workforce with the skills and education necessary to allow us to continue our rapid pace of innovation that helps improve and save lives daily. Improving the quality of STEM education in this country and fueling interest in STEM amongst America's young people ranks among one of most important ways that the United States can remain competitive as a country. STEM education and growing the number of students interested in STEM is a top priority for every CIO and business leader with whom I interact. Boston Scientific applauds Congressman Honda for his efforts to improve STEM education in America and we look forward to working with him and others in Congress on this important issue."

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